Pick Clark

THE Churchman's Monthly Magazine.

[Vol. III.] AUGUST, 1806. [No. 8.]

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THAT WHICH IS OF GOD WE DEFEND TO THE UTTERMOST OF THAT WHICH WE HATH GIVEN: THAT WHICH IS OTHERWISE, LET IT WITHER EVEN IN THE ROOT FROM WHENCE IT HATH SPRUNG.—HOOKER.

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REFLECTIONS FOR AUGUST.

AT high noon, or with the setting sun, the mustering clouds now often gather all their forces, and skirt the west with a portending gloom—Deep toned thunder rolls solemn on the listening ear—Driven by fierce winds, nearer and nearer comes the tempest, till it gains the whole horizon, and darkness closes around. The approaching night with tenfold shade obscures all the landscape; save when the vivid flash streaks down the air, and the heavens are rent with bursting peals of thunder, re-echoed in solemn roar from the distant hills. Again the lightning darts its piercing shafts, and in a moment comes the dread volley from the loaded clouds: Fraught with destruction, comes the sulphury bolt—The lofty oak feels its mighty power; riven to its center, and strewed in splinters across the plain; its singed leafy branches hanging inverted around its shattered trunk. But see, another and another comes: Yon stately edifice, the abode of man, is rent in pieces, or soon involved in smoke and flame; and where is that frail mortal who stood exposed to the etherial shaft? Instantly dismissed from the body, and sent to the eternal world.

This dread war of elements, this exhibition of *his* power who *sitteth on the circuit of the heavens*, is a scene, which, at the passing season, is frequently witnessed by every one. And few indeed there are who can witness it as careless and unconcerned spectators. Stupidity itself is roused to attention: The most thoughtless and vain cannot but be awakened to serious reflection. The impious and irreligious stand aghast and tremble, when they thus hear the voice of God rending the clouds, and with his right hand sending his fiery arrows abroad. Their vain imaginations and their lofty looks are curbed into reverential awe, and they dare not trifle with God, and a present sense of his power. Guilt hears appalled; it trembles with fear, and resolves on immediate repentance: And well it may; for who knoweth whether soon it may not be too late? Nor can he, in whose bosom dwells the sincerest piety, remain altogether unmoved with fear. Knowing that he who directeth the storm by his mighty power, has taken one and left another, he feels that instantly his turn may come, and the winged messenger of

death, quicker than thought, may summon his departure; the resistless shaft of heaven may fall upon his defenceless head, and lay him a lifeless corpse. Though not fearless, yet he will strive to collect his scattered thoughts, retire into himself, and examine the state of his soul. He will enquire with rigid impartiality, whether he is prepared to appear disembodied before his Creator and sovereign Judge. He will banish trifling thoughts far away, and dwell in musing solemnity on the wondrous ways of God, who rideth in the whirlwind, and bids it where to blow, and where to cease its rage; where to discharge its fiery weapons, and when to withhold them from the earth. He will trace his footsteps in the clouds, and *the lightning down of his arm.* He will mark how the waters behold him and flee; how the torrents pour down, and run among the hills; how at his bidding the "air thunders, and his arrows fly abroad." When the clouds dispart, when the heavens seem on fire, and the air resounds with peal on peal repeated, he will call to mind that he hears the voice of God, speaking in terrible majesty, to rouse the stupid sinner from his lethargy, and awaken the pious to a more quickening sense of his power. He will not suffer an occasion so apt to inspire sentiments of reverence for God's presence, to go by unimproved; but will strive to impress on his mind who it is that reigns in the heavens above, and on earth beneath, even God in his holy habitation.

Let philosophy teach that thunder and lightning are only powerful agents of nature. Be it so: yet who gave being to these agents? Who appointed the manner of their operation? Who still controls their power, directs them where to let fall the deadly stroke, and where to glance harmless through the air? Piety and reason unitedly proclaim that it must be that God who made and rules the universe. A blind and unintelligent cause could not have produced so much order as we observe. A power less than Almighty could not wield so vast a machine; nor wisdom less than infinite, produce such a connected chain of harmonizing events, depending on so many and such subtile movements. All nature then is but an instrument in God's hand; its operations are the operations of his power, contrived by his wisdom, and subservient to his purposes. In the language of inspiration; *it is the glorious God that maketh the thunder: The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire. The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness; the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadish.* When clouds are mustering in the sky, and the thunder begins to roll, remember this—be still, and know that there is a God in heaven, who shall one day arise to shake more terribly the earth.

Let philosophy teach how to ward off impending fate, from the overcharged clouds: It is her office so to do. This she hath done; yet hath not thereby attempted to counteract the will of heaven, any more than by shewing how to build houses to guard us from common storms; or how to weave garments to protect our bodies from cold and heat. All the elements are God's instruments; and we

should thank him for giving man wisdom and knowledge to contrive the means of guarding against the violence of their operations. Such was the intention of his high will; that our faculties and powers, both of body and mind, might find exercise. They were none of them given us in vain, but to be employed for our good and the glory of the giver; and therefore we are placed in a situation which requires their constant exercise; we are obliged to guard against extremes, on one hand, and the other from all the elements: against too much heat, and too much cold; against violence, and inaction; and yet, in spite of our utmost skill, as experience daily shews, our bodies must fall a sacrifice, if not to the instantaneous power of the etherial touch, yet to the slower, but not less certain, effect of some other element.

That terror and dismay which seizes the minds of some, and almost deprives them of reason, when the cloud arises, fraught with thunder and lightning, is altogether unbecoming the Christian. Nothing that has been said is intended to inspire this terror, but the reverse. Seriously bear it in mind that all the elements are in God's hand; that he is a God of wisdom as well as of power; that blind chance has nothing to do in directing the rending bolt of heaven; but that it is aimed by unerring wisdom; and considerate you ought to be, but not distracted with terror; collected and resigned, but not stupid and thoughtless. Can you not trust infinite wisdom to rule the storm, and guide its course? Are you not willing that he should do what is most certainly right, as he always does; for he is no less just than wise? Are you not willing to commit yourself to his keeping, and rely upon his mercy? If you cannot do this, and be calm while the lightning blazes around you, you have not that settled piety of soul which becomes a professed believer in the being and government of God. Strive then with all the force of your reason and consideration, to acquire this undisturbed reliance on that power by whom you are surrounded. Neglect no opportunity that presents to take an instructive lesson from the overcharged clouds that darken the air, and send out their arrows. They surely speak in a voice loud enough to be heard; in a language plain to be understood: They exhort you, every time they rise and cover the sky, to look unto God for safety, in whom you are conscious you live and move and have your being.

There are perhaps few persons in the world of so stupid or hardened a temper, as not to have their feelings in some measure solemnized, when first they hear the distant thunder, and perceive the gloom rising up the sky. As nearer and nearer the storm approaches, and louder and louder its explosions on the stricken ear, these feelings are wrought up to the sublime and awful: The cheering light of the sun foreclosed, or the tenfold pitchy darkness of evening adding to the solemnity, how opportune the occasion to excite reverential awe and devout homage to the author of nature! Sublime sensations, from whatever cause awakened, are congenial with reflections upon the power of Almighty God, in whom centers all majesty and grandeur. The considerate and pious, admonished by the passing scene, naturally fall into the train of reflections expres-

sed by the Holy Psalmist: *He bowed the heavens also, and came down, and darkness was under his feet: he rode upon a cherub, and did fly; yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. At the brightness that was before him, the thick clouds passed; hail-stones and coals of fire. The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the highest gave his voice; hail-stones and coals of fire.* Thus always instructive are the operations of his hand: If duly considered, always apt to inspire devotion and reverence for his divine majesty.

But we may usefully carry our reflections on this subject a step higher. We may well ask, is not a thunder-storm an emblem in miniature of the scene that shall pass in the last day, as described in the word of God; when *the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?* When the trumpet shall sound, and the Lord shall descend with a mighty shout of saints and angels, singing his praise: and when the lightning of his countenance shall veil the sun, and cause the earth to flee away that it be no more seen? In comparison with that mighty shout, the thunder which we now hear is but a feeble whisper; and with the lightning which shall set the world on fire, this which now we see is but the faint glimmer of the glow-worm. So tremendous shall be the exhibition of his power in that great day. When we consider how wonderful are the effects of this faint image of the earth's final doom; how the hardest oaks are shattered, the rocks rent, and the earth made to tremble, we may well conjecture that this material element shall be the instrument in God's hand, by which he will accomplish his great purpose, and cause that time shall be no more. How solemn the consideration! How instructive each cloud that arises! Let not then so apt an occasion ever pass by without being reminded of that awful hour, in which it will infinitely concern every one to be holy and clean in the sight of God. With these and such like reflections ever in mind, God will be glorified in his works, the passing season will be improved to the interest of piety and virtue, the plants of which, thus cultivated, will grow up to maturity, and bring forth an abundant crop in the autumn; and thus a rich treasure will be laid up for time and eternity.

MEMOIRS OF Mr. DAVID SANFORD.

Mr. Editor,

AS you have frequently requested your corespondents to furnish you with biographical sketches of eminent persons, I send you the following Memoirs of a character, that, considering his years, as much deserves distinction as any that ever lived, David Sanford, who died at the foot of the Rapids of the Miami, October 11th, 1805, aged 22 years.

Mr. Sanford was son of John Sanford, Esq. of Newtown, Connecticut. At a very early period he discovered a studious and contemplative mind, which by his parents was stored with the first

principles of the Christian religion; and as it opened, it displayed so many amiable qualities, that they flattered themselves with the hope of much fruit from a blossom so promising. While quite a child he exhibited not only an attachment to literature in general, but an astonishing genius in mathematics, in which he would be found busily employed, while others of his age, would be at play. His father did not send him from a common English school, until the age of 14. His rapid improvement excited the admiration of his instructors. In 1801 he entered the junior class in Yale College, and was soon noticed by the instructors and members of that institution for his piety, and deep knowledge in mathematics and astronomy. He took the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1803.

After returning to his father, it became a very serious question with him in what profession he should be most useful to his fellow creatures. For several months he doubted; and in his daily devotions, which were remarkably regular, he always asked counsel of heaven to be directed in the *way he should go*. He finally determined to devote his time and talents at the Altar of the *Protestant Episcopal Church*, to which he had been uniformly attached from his childhood. Having injured his eyes by a too close application, he was advised to lay aside his books until he recovered his sight; during which time he accepted of the appointment of Deputy-Surveyor under Jared Mansfield, Surveyor-General of the United States. Accordingly he left home in July 1804, for Marietta in the State of Ohio; he safely arrived and soon commenced business, in which he continued until he died. He enjoyed good health until about two weeks before his dissolution, when he was visited with a slow intermittent fever. Being in the wilderness, and of course destitute of proper regimen and timely aid from physicians, he stopped at the rapids of the Miami of the lakes; being soon convinced that his case was desperate, he submitted with calmness, frequently requested the Holy Scriptures to be read to him (which with the book of common prayer he always carried with him) with an uncommon share of Christian resignation he never murmured, and died without a groan. Thus early at the age of twenty-two, died one of the most extraordinary young men of this age: But wisdom, not years, is the grey hair to man; and unspotted life is old age. The following tribute of respect from one of his classmates is worthy of being noticed in this place.

"Those who were acquainted with this young man, cannot but sensibly feel and long remember his untimely end. The friends of humanity and the lovers of literature will unite in deploring his departure. Few surpassed him, few equalled in natural endowments, and scientific attainments. His mind was peculiarly calculated for logical precision and clearness in the investigation of intricate subjects. In the various branches of mathematics, in astronomy, navigation and surveying, he particularly excelled. His talents were of the useful kind. He treasured up knowledge to apply it to useful purposes. This he did while he lived, and in the prosecution of this he died. His promised usefulness is now at an end. Although but partially known to the public, when he died, his death was

deeply lamented. Those who knew him better, will be better able to appreciate his worth. His afflicted friends will find a numerous circle to sympathize with them on this occasion. His college acquaintance and classmates in particular, will mingle their tears and pay the tribute which is justly due to such deceased merit."

In addition to which the writer thinks proper to add the following paragraph from a funeral sermon, delivered at Newtown, to a numerous and deeply affected audience. "Although the family, the Church, the country, the arts and sciences, have sustained a heavy loss; yet their and our loss is of a temporal nature, while it is his spiritual gain; and by a faithful improvement will be conducive to the spiritual advantage of every one of us. And this may account, why a young man 22 years of age, amiable in his person and deportment; possessing a deep, thoughtful, retentive mind; capacious in its nature, enlarged by useful knowledge, and always influenced by religion; a heart guided by the precepts and institutions of the gospel; singularly pious towards God; filial to his parents, strictly attached to truth from his childhood; reserved in his manners; cautious of forming his opinion of persons and things; undeviating in his friendship; compassionate towards the poor and distressed, and ever seeking the happiness of mankind. Why such a promising blossom should so early fade, as only to raise the expectation to an eminence, from which to behold the whole blasted in a moment; so bright a sun to set in a morning cloud of obscure darkness; why so much worth, virtue and science, should all perish, and be buried in an obscure and distant grave, without an enemy in the world, and yet without a relative friend, to drop the tributary tear. And why

> "By foreign hands his dying eyes be clos'd,
> "By foreign hands his decent limbs compos'd,
> "By foreign hands his humble grave adorn'd,
> "By strangers honour'd, and by strangers mourn'd."

And all this while so many, worn out with age, and like a sheaf of corn fully ripe, waiting to be gathered into the garner of God, are spared; why, my fellow Christians, but that the youth, and all should be thoroughly convinced of the uncertainty of life, and the transitory nature of all sublunary enjoyments. Be deeply and experimentally affected with the passage of scripture under consideration; *Go to now, ye that say to day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell and get gain; whereas, ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, if the Lord will, we shall live to do this or that.*

In a consolatory address to the bereaved family, it was observed: "You devoted your son at an early period to God in baptism; you early instructed him in the first principles of Christianity; you early discovered his opening mind, thirsting for knowledge, divine, scientific and moral. Under God you were enabled to give him an early opportunity; his daily progress and growing years increased your raised expectations.

"We submitted to his late unhappy tour; we commended him to the holy keeping of Almighty God. He has taken him to himself,

whose will is more precious to us than thousands of worlds. Say then, fade lovely flower at his sovereign pleasure. He can cast away the richest gem without loss, or return it again with increased lustre. We part with thee then willingly, obediently and gratefully. We will entrust thy precious remains in the far distant and solitary grave, under the eye of that Jesus, who will hereafter cause his mortal to put on immortality. For a soul endowed with so many godlike qualities, can never perish. The body, although mouldering below the murmuring rapids of Miami, shall be reanimated, shall burst the walls of the dark prison that confines it, and, arrayed in robes of celestial glory, shall be ushered into everlasting day; and shall shine, not as the more distant and twinkling stars (on which he so much delighted to contemplate, as part of the infinite works of God) but as a star of the first magnitude; where his capacious mind shall be forever filled with the hidden mysteries of God. *Sorrow not then as those without hope.* May Christian consolation abound in your hearts, and comfort you with the *peace of God, that passeth all understanding.*"

A few extracts from his epistolary communications, will enable the reader to see, as well as hear, of this excellent youth. A little before his death, in a letter to his parents, he concludes thus: "I have enjoyed very good health, and have a good prospect of its continuance: I have become inured to this manner of living, and naturalized to the country I am in, but still intend again to see Connecticut, and apply myself to study. My love and affection to my friends, acquaintances and relations. May our great benefactor bless them, with blessings better than temporal and earthly possessions, for the sake of the *Redeemer of all men.*" Speaking of his future prospects, he observes, "I am not anxious whether I acquire fortune, honour, place, &c. or not: I shall endeavour to be contented; if I acquire property, I wish to acquire and retain with it a disposition to benevolent and useful purposes, rather then spend it in extravagance and folly. If I gain nothing in the pecuniary way, I hope to gain something in knowledge, and to return, with contentment, to my native place, to settle in an honest, useful and charitable employment; to live to acquire knowledge and virtue, and to die happily." Correspondent to these reflections, was his opinion of the shortness of human life. "Life" says he, "is too short to amass much science; it is barely sufficiently long to answer the purposes which God intended it, that of a school to eternity." He had the most exalted opinion of prayer; pressing this duty upon a young gentleman in college, he writes thus, "Prayer is the breath of the Christian soul."

I shall conclude these memoirs with the following, taken from a Cincinnati paper, supposed to be from the pen of the Surveyor-General.

"The death of this young gentleman is a subject of the deepest regret to his friends, and an irreparable loss to the world; as he possessed a genius and qualities which were calculated to render him an ornament to human nature. In many of the walks of literature and science he was pre-eminent; and his knowledge of chemistry, mechanics, optics, and natural philosophy in general, was

vast and astonishing, for one of his years. But that for which his faculties appeared best adapted, and with which they shone with resplendent lustre, was mathematics and astronomy. For these he may be said to have had a predilection from infancy. When a boy, put as usual, to school, to learn the elements of reading and writing, he was found engaged in the study of the Elements of Euclid. That immortal work, which, for more than two thousand years, has been the subject of admiration among men of the highest intellectual endowments, was, perhaps in a solitary instance, not beyond the comprehension of a child. At the age of 14, this extraordinary youth had made such proficiency in mathematics and astronomy, that he actually calculated, and delineated, with much precision and neatness, a number of eclipses of the sun and moon, and occultations of the stars. He continued to pursue, with unremitting ardor and delight, the more profound researches of science, and particularly of the mathematics, in all the intervals of leisure, during the remainder of his short life; and had already struck out many new improvements and inventions, in the abstruse parts of geometry and fluxions. But mere intellectual improvement was not the only, or most valuable trait in the character of this uncommon person. He was pure and uncorrupted in his morals, virtuous and inoffensive in his conduct, and dutiful to his Maker. With every prospect of becoming great and eminent in this world, he endured the pains of sickness, and the pangs of departing life, with the fortitude of a christian martyr: not a murmur, sigh, or groan escaped him. He has regained his native seat among those pure and perfect intelligences, in a state, of which he had ever entertained the most exalted idea."

FOR THE CHURCHMAN'S MAGAZINE.

THE CHRISTIAN EXAMINED.

DO you ever pray? Every one professing the hallowed name of Christian will undoubtedly reply, *yes*. I ask then why? To which you will perhaps reply, because I was taught in my childhood to say my prayers; I was told that God would bless those who do so, and I often hear the duty inculcated from the pulpit. It is very well, and you profit, it seems, of these instructions: but have you no other reasons to give? Certainly you will say, I find myself in want of many things, worldly comforts, success in business, prosperity and wealth; I want to be defended from disasters and calamities, and it is my duty to ask God for these favours. So then it seems you have a great deal of self-interest at bottom, urging you to the performance of this sacred service. And indeed so you may have in a measure; for such is the constitution of our nature, that we cannot, and ought not if we could, altogether disregard ourselves in any of our performances. But how stands the matter, if upon examination you find self to be the main or only motive? If you come unto God, merely as a beggar, to have your own wants satisfied, without any real love or reverence for his character? Are you not subject to St. James' reproof, *Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may con-*

sume it upon your lusts? Can you expect that such self-interested prayers will be accepted? How can they find their way to heaven?

God is a spirit, and they who worship him, must worship in spirit and truth. What then is this *spirit and truth?* I will not suppose you ignorant that it cannot consist in a mere form of words, in which the heart and affections take no interest, and bear no share. But what are the motives, what the considerations with which the feelings should be enlivened? Coldness and indifference is excluded from real prayer: A mere longing, however ardent, to supply our own wants, is too mean and sordid a consideration to consecrate our prayers and make them acceptable to God. Notwithstanding you know and feel this to be true; yet examine well your own heart, and the state of your mind when you pray unto God, or when you profess so to do; let conscience do its perfect work; smother not its admonitions; resist not its demands; but answer truly to yourself. When temporal want, the loss of some present comfort, or the fear of some calamity, excites you to look unto God for help, are not your affections far more awakened than when you prosper in the enjoyment of these poor trifles which the world has to bestow? And is not this an indisputable proof, that your own interest is too much at the bottom? That you have little regard to the honour and glory of God? Is it not a too plain proof that time and the things of time have more influence on you than those of eternity? Is it not saying, Lord grant me the accommodations of the body, whatever may become of those which belong to the soul? Do you not neglect those interests which are infinitely important, seeing they shall endure forever, and cleave fast unto those which are but momentary? If you never pray with engaged feelings as though you would be heard, save when you solicit some present good, or the removal of some present evil, can you more plainly declare, that present self-interest bears chief sway in urging you to the duty you profess to discharge? As little as this becomes the Christian name, yet many there are who hardly give any other proof of their sincerity. So long as they go on much to their minds in present things; while Providence smiles on their undertakings, and they meet with no cross events nor calamities which greatly disturb their dreams of repose, they will, for form's sake, hurry over their devotions without interest or concern in what they do; a mere lifeless formality. But let afflictions come near their hearts; let calamities lie heavy on their souls, and they are alive to prayer and supplication; they cry earnestly unto God for help: Their prayers are not then the empty homage of the lips, but the warm effusions of the heart also.

Too many such Christians it is manifest there are. Are you one of the number? If you are, let me tell you, your life very illy accords with your profession: You have hardly imbibed the first principles of Christian practice, and the spirit of God presides not over your affections; you live not unto him, but unto yourself; he is scarcely in all your thoughts. So long as you make some great necessity the only occasion on which you really and truly pray unto him, do you not seem to think he needs to be informed of your wants before he can relieve them; and solicited and urged by en-

treaties before he will be disposed to grant relief? This you know cannot be the case. Still can you not see abundance of reason for prayer and supplication? Will not the habitual practice of the duty make you humble and resigned to the allotments of Providence? Will it not inspire you with awe and reverence for the divine majesty, and make you feel your dependence on his power? Will it not tend to keep in mind his immediate presence, that you are surrounded by him, and cannot escape his notice? However small may be the effect of the heartless forms of hypocricy, yet an ever operative and practical reverence for the authority of God, and obedience to his holy laws, can never be separated from the daily exercise of fervent devotion; they are united in the nature of the thing, and necessarily beget each other. And when thus united in your heart, they will take down the lofty looks of pride; they will humble you under a sense of your own unworthiness, and the great condescension of God in listening to your requests. They will make you sober and temperate in the enjoyment of present comforts, inasmuch as you will always remember from whom they come, even from him in whom you live and move and have your being; without whom you could not a moment breathe, nor enjoy a single blessing. Being thus fashioned in the frame and temper of your mind, being conformed in your disposition and conduct to the will of God, you become fit for his blessings to be poured down upon you. By your prayers you alter not the counsels of God; you alter only yourself, and make it fit and becoming for the immutable God to smile upon and bless you with his favours. See you not then reasons enough for prayer, though you do not expect to inform the all-seeing God, or change any of his eternal ways? See you not why you should pray, after the example of him who needed not any thing, having all fullness in himself, saying, *not my will but thine be done?* See you not why you should profit of his instruction who emptied himself of the glory he had before the world was, and came on earth to teach you how to pray acceptably to his Father, saying, *thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven?*

But perhaps these enquiries concerning the nature of prayer and the kind of return we are to expect to our petitions, though they may satisfy our reason, yet are less calculated to raise the affections and inspire real devotion, than considerations of a different nature. Look around you then, and ask your own heart one question; had not that God who made you a right to make it one condition of your being, that you should ask for such things as you need? Is it not perfectly right that he should lay upon you such a condition? The common sense of all ages of men has proclaimed that it is; and will you deny God his right? If neither reason nor the authority of God are enough to prevail on you, look and see if you cannot find a sufficient motive in gratitude for what you have already received. Have you not been preserved in life amidst many dangers? Have you not escaped from sickness and casualties, by that watchful Providence which guards all things? Are you not daily receiving good at the hand of the Lord? You can but say you are. He permits you to live in his world, in which are many comforts, notwithstanding a mixture of evil. He every day crowns your life with mercy and loving kind-

ness. He gives you food and raiment. Look to the heavens above and the earth beneath, and see how all is contrived for comfort and enjoyment.

But these are trifles compared with what he has done and is doing for you in the work of his grace. Hopeless were your condition without redeeming love. Eternal misery in the life to come would have been your portion. But now the door is set open, and you may enter into life. Your divine Saviour has gone before, and sends down his Holy Spirit to guide you, if you resist not, in the heavenly road to bliss. A glorious eternity is before you. A never-ending triumph awaits you beyond the grave. And all this you are to receive from the same power that gave you life. Can you not then be stimulated by gratitude, under a sense of so many benefits, to be engaged and warm in your acts of devotion? Can you not be earnest when you petition a friend who has done so much for you? Can you not assuredly feel that he hears you, when he is so perpetually doing you good? And how animating should be the thought, that you are holding converse with the great King of Heaven! How ennobling the reflection that he permits and encourages you so to do! Strange that any one pretending to reason, should think the employment grovelling and mean! Yet so it is: So perverse can be the human heart. Would you enjoy the delights attendant on the performance of this duty? Then go and practice. Without practice it is impossible you should know any thing of the calm serenity, the tranquil joy that it diffuses over the pious soul; a joy that nothing earthly can disturb; for it is a good thing to sing praises unto God, *yea, a joyful and pleasant thing it is to be thankful.*

But supposing you to be duly sensible of this, and that you determine to practise accordingly, what will you pray for? what will you most earnestly desire at God's hand? Length of days, temporal prosperity, riches and honours? If so, you will be cumbered about much serving, and neglect the one thing needful. You forget our Lord's direction, *seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.* By praying for temporal good, you pray for what it may be inconsistent with God's will to grant: But if you ask for spiritual endowments, your prayers will certainly be heard. God has promised, and he will fulfil. He has said, *ask and ye shall receive; knock and it shall be opened unto you.* No one ever yet sincerely prayed for the grace of God, but he received it. No one ever yet earnestly besought of God, humility, patience, and charity, without finding himself strengthened in the exercise of these virtues. No one ever sought true spiritual wisdom but he found; and as in the case of Solomon, by praying for this, which is the main thing, he obtains many others also; for the Lord blesses his days here on earth with peace and tranquility. *There be many that say who will shew us any good; Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.* Thus prayed the holy Psalmist; and is this the burden, sum and substance of your prayers? Then are they acceptable to God, and will assuredly draw down a blessing on yourself.

I must not conclude this examination without a question or two more. Are you the master of a family? And do you admit the duty of praying for yourself, yet neglect to pray with and for those under your care? If this be the case, as we have too much reason to fear it is with many, who would be thought sober and rational Christians, what excuse have you to make for such neglect? Dare you say it is because business or amusements occupy all your time? Do you think such a plea will be admitted at the tribunal of God? Think but a minute, and you must know it will not. What else then have you to offer by way of extenuation? Will you say that you know not how to express your petitions in suitable words? This will not do; for the *Church*, to which I hope you belong, has provided suitable forms which you may use, if you feel yourself unequal to the task of framing prayers for yourself, or choose not to use those of your own inditing. Do not withdraw your mind from these questions, but answer them fairly to your own heart: Do it with a full sense that you stand in the presence of an all-seeing God, who perfectly knows whether your excuses are frivolous, whether the interests of eternity are to give place to those of a day; and shall judge you accordingly in the last great day of the Lord. After duly considering these things, it is to be hoped you will resolve with the return of each day to bless God, you and your household, for his preservation of you during the darksome hours of the night, and ask his grace and favour to assist you in the duties of the day; and again renew your solemn vows when evening spreads its shades around the earth: So will you have the blessing of God resting on your labours; you will contribute to your temporal, and secure your everlasting peace. The rising generation under your eye, will be brought up to reverence, and fear God; to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present life, and look to another for their crown of rejoicing.

EXPOSITION OF THE ARTICLES OF THE CHURCH.

ARTICLE III.

"Of the going down of Christ into hell. As Christ died for us, and was buried, so also it is to be believed that he went down into hell."

THAT Christ descended into hell, is not expressly asserted by any of the Evangelists; but they all relate that he expired upon the cross, and that after three days, he again appeared alive; and therefore it may be inferred, that in the intermediate time, his soul went into the common receptacle of departed souls. But a more direct proof of this proposition may be found in St. Peter's sermon, after the effusion of the Holy Ghost, on the day of Pentecost, in which he applies to the resurrection of our Saviour the passage in the Psalms, *Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.* Christ's soul must have been in hell, since God is here represented as not finally leaving it there, but as re-uniting it to the body of Christ, after a certain interval; and therefore, as "Christ died for us, and was buried, so also it is to be believed, that he went down into hell." It is to be observed, that the word

rendered "hell" in the above passage, both in the Septuagint translation of the Psalms, and in the Acts, is *hades*. Dr. Campbell has shewn that this word, which occurs eleven times in the New Testament, and is frequently used in the Septuagint translation of the Old, never signifies in scripture the place of torment, to which the wicked are to be consigned after the day of judgment; but always the place appropriated for the common reception of departed souls, in the intermediate time between death and the general resurrection.

It seems probable that the doctrine of Christ's descent into hell was first introduced into Creeds, for the purpose of declaring the actual separation of Christ's soul and body, in opposition to those who asserted, that the crucifixion produced only a trance, or swooning, and that he did not really suffer death.

ARTICLE IV.

Of the Resurrection of Christ.

"CHRIST did truly rise again from death, and took again his body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature; wherewith he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth, until he return to judge all men at the last day."

We have the authority of St. Peter for asserting, that the resurrection of Christ was foretold by the royal Psalmist: *Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day; therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption*....Acts xi. 29. And our Saviour himself repeatedly foretold his resurrection: *The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men; and they shall kill him; and the third day he shall be raised again.*

It is reasonable to expect, that the evidence of the truth of this great event, the importance of which was thus solemnly announced, should be proportionably strong and unequivocal; and upon enquiry we shall find, that the resurrection of Christ is supported by the clearest and most satisfactory proofs.

In the explanation of the second article, we have seen that the body of Jesus, after it was taken down from the cross, was buried after the customary manner of the Jews. The chief priests caused the sepulchre to be sealed, and to be guarded by Roman soldiers. The object of this caution was, that, by securing and exhibiting the dead body of Christ, they might, as they thought, be able to disprove any report, which the disciples might spread concerning his restoration to life; whereas this very caution tended to confirm the truth of his resurrection, by rendering it impossible that his body should have been removed by any human means. Thus does God produce good out of evil, and make even wicked men the instruments of executing the great designs of his Providence. It is related by all the Evangelists, that Jesus Christ, early on the third day after he was

crucified and buried, arose from the dead, and afterwards appeared alive. We learn from the Acts, that the resurrection of Christ was constantly asserted, and urged with peculiar earnestsness, by the first preachers of the Gospel; and in the Epistles it is repeatedly mentioned as a well known and acknowledged fact. The certainty of Christ's resurrection did not rest upon a transient glance, or a single interview with his Apostles; he conversed with them forty days, which precluded every sort of illusion or mistake; nor did it depend on these chosen ministers of the Gospel, for he was seen by various other persons, and particularly by five hundred disciples at once; he ate and drank with many to whom he was known before his crucifixion; and he made Thomas feel the print of the nails by which he had been fastened to the cross, and of the spear with which his side had been pierced, to convince him that he was the same Jesus who had been crucified; that he had flesh and bones, and was not a spirit....John xx. 26.

As the enemies of Christ had been peculiarly careful to guard against any fraud or deception; and as they were fully sensible, that the resurrection, if real and generally believed, would have a great influence upon the minds of men, it is impossible not to suppose that they examined into it with the most anxious diligence, and most jealous minuteness; and as they did not dare to contradict it themselves, or even venture to produce the soldiers whom they had suborned for the purpose of asserting that the body of Jesus was stolen out of the grave by night, we must conclude, that they found it attested by a weight of evidence which no authority could suppress, nor any art invalidate. Upon these grounds we believe that "Christ did truly rise again from death, and took again his body with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature; wherewith he ascended into heaven."

As the resurrection of Christ was foretold by David, so also was his ascension: *Thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men*....Ps. lxviii. 18. which passage refers to the ascension of our Saviour into heaven, to his triumph over sin and death, and to his sending the glorious gifts of the spirit to the sons of men. Christ himself also predicted his ascension.—*Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father*....John xx. 17. That Christ really ascended into heaven with the same body with which he lived, and died, and rose again, is declared by St. Mark and by St. Luke, both in his Gospel, and in the Acts of the Apostles; but it will be sufficient to transcribe the account from St. Luke's Gospel: *And he led out his Apostles as far as Bethany; and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them; while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.* And there he sitteth. The sitting of Christ at the right hand of God is foretold in the Old Testament, and asserted in the New: *The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool*....Psalm cx. 1. Christ applied this passage to himself....Matt. xxii. 42, &c. and it is quoted by St. Paul, as describing the superiority of Christ to all created beings: *To which of the angels, said he at any time, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?*...Heb. i. 13.

Christ himself expressly foretold his sitting at the right hand of God, *Hereafter shall the Son of Man sit at the right hand of the power of God*....Luke xxii. 69. By the metaphorical expression of sitting at the right hand of God, which is applied in scripture to none but Christ, we are to understand the honour and dignity to which he was exalted after his ascension into heaven: *Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels, and authorities, and powers, being made subject unto him*....1 Peter iii. 22. until he return to judge all men at the last day.

The second advent of Christ, and the purpose for which he is to come, are clearly foretold in scripture: *I go to prepare a place for you; I will come again and receive you unto myself*....John xiv. 3. and 28.—*This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven*....Acts i. 11. —*The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God*....1 Thess. iv. 16.— *Him the heavens must receive till the final restitution of all things*.... Acts iii. 21.—*For God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he raised him from the dead*....Acts xvii. 30.—*When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them from one another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats*....Mat. xxv. 31, 32.—*Then we shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*....2 Cor. v. 10. —*The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*....John v. 22. *The day of the Lord shall come, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat*....2 Pet. iii. 20. In short, no doctrine is more clear and express, and fundamental in the word of God, than that of a general judgment at the end of the world, when the state of our trial and probation shall be finished, which will be a proper season for the distribution of public justice, for rewarding all those with eternal life, *who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honour, and immortality*, and for rendering to *them that obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish*.... Rom. ii. 7. I shall therefore conclude my observations upon this article with that most excellent inference of St. Peter: *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for, and hastening, unto the coming of the day of God*....2 Pet. iii. 11, 12.

CASTELLIO'S TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE.

THE Prophets, when under the immediate inspiration of God's Spirit, and made to behold future things, were naturally transported into the use of a language highly figurative and full of bold

allusions, and uncommon modes of expression. Hence it is hard to be understood, and more difficult to be truly translated: a too literal rendering certainly produces obscurity in the sense, and aukwardness in the expression. From these causes Daniel's prophecy of the coming of Messiah appears to have suffered under the hands of our English translators. The main point, the limitation of the time, is indeed obviously enough expressed; but with regard to the immediately subsequent events, the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, it is not so well expressed, so clearly and certainly pointing to those transactions, as it is in *Castellio*. This will appear from a comparison.

Dan. chap. 9. ver. 26, 27. *And after three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate*....Bible.

And after sixty and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, and that being forsaken; and a renowned people shall come, who shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and her end shall be to be sacked, and to suffer cruel calamities to the end of the war. And one week shall confirm the covenant with many; and the middle of the week shall take away the sacrifice and oblation; and disastrous crimes shall be committed upon her battlements, even unto utter depopulation, and cruelty shall flow with destruction....Cast.

Almost in the very terms of *Josephus*, who has historically described the destruction of Jerusalem, has the prophecy, thus worded, pointed out the event. Motives of prudence might perhaps in this case, induce the Prophet to express himself obscurely, lest by plainness of speech in foretelling the destruction of that city and temple which the Jews were just then going to rebuild, he might damp their ardor, and discourage their exertions. But the event having long since come to pass, it is obvious to what the prophecy relates; and more obvious from *Castellio's* rendering than from that of the Bible: Though both are intelligible, yet the former is the clearest, and therefore to be preferred.

FOR THE CHURCHMAN'S MAGAZINE.

ESSAY ON INFIDELITY....No. V.

IT will not be denied that the writers who have seen fit, of late years, to exert their talents in the cause of infidelity, have very much laboured to shew that the doctrines and institutions, the faith and practices of Christianity, tend to degrade and corrupt the human character, to produce animosity and contention in society, to enervate its strength, and thereby pave the way for the overthrow of states and nations. Of this tendency, in a particular manner, are

Paine's *Age of Reason*, Volney's *Ruins*, and many insinuations in the celebrated Gibbon. If what these writers have said be true, they are undoubtedly right in labouring to destroy the influence of a system so pernicious to the welfare of men, and thereby to pave the way for its final extirpation. Notwithstanding all the arguments that may be adduced from the fulfilment of prophecy, miracles, and every other consideration, if what it requires to be believed and practised appears to be mischievous in its consequences; it cannot have come from a God of wisdom, mercy and loving kindness, as it professes; and therefore ought to be rejected by every rational being.

They who thus labour to represent our religion in a disadvantageous point of view, very commonly no doubt think they have truth and reason on their side. To say they designedly misrepresent would be uncandid and untrue. But at the same time, have they taken a fair and unbiased view of the whole subject in all its lights? Have they not ascribed effects to the wrong causes? May not the evils, the debasement, and final ruin which societies of men experience, be much more rationally attributed to the corruption inherent in man's nature; to cure which the gospel of Jesus Christ is intended, though with all its happy tendencies it is not able to accomplish, since there are too many who will not listen to its precepts, nor be governed by its influence.

Because ambition, and lust of worldly greatness is found united with the profession of Christianity, disturbing the peace of human society; because thirst of gain induces oppression; because pride and party enmities alienate the affections of men one from another, weaken the bonds by which they should be united, and in some cases bring on complete dissolution; because, in short, vice of every kind prevails in a greater or less degree, in conjunction with the light of the gospel, does it therefore follow that one is the cause of the other? Every smatterer in reasoning knows that such a conclusion would be unfairly drawn. Coincidence of time and place is no certain proof of connexion as cause and effect. Nay, and what if wars, those dreadful scourges of mankind, have been undertaken, and thousands of lives sacrificed on pretence of propagating or defending the true faith, where is the blame to attach? There is no warrant to be found in the gospel for any such thing; it results not from the spirit and genius of Christianity, which constantly inculcates forbearance and condescension, so much so as to be charged by some infidels with rendering men weak and pusillanimous. We ought then to look for the cause of such wars in the corrupt passions of men, which, if religion were out of the way, would not fail to find some other reason for stirring up strife. If any conclusions can be drawn from experience, we have a right to say that this great evil would by no means cease if Christianity were abolished; for the whole history of the world will attest, that ambition and lust of dominion never want pretexts for going to war. And as to the ordinary vices of individuals, it will be time enough to charge them to the account of Christianity, when any age or country can be found where men have been more pure in their morals, more orderly, rational, and sober in their manners, and

civilized in their institutions, than what is to be found among Christians.

It is common for those who accuse Christians of religious wars, to do it as though they alone were ever guilty of the like. But let them look into history, and they will find no want of examples, to the dishonour of human nature indeed; but such are the passions of men. Even ancient Greece,* which in its great tolerance admited the worship of several thousand divinities, affords an instance of a war that raged for ten years with the utmost violence, involving all the States of that confederacy; the cause of which was nothing more than ploughing up a piece of ground that had been dedicated to one of their divinities, an act that was deemed sacrilegious. Hence the war was called the *sacred*, or religious *war*. Did Christians ever go to war on so frivolous a pretext? There is no instance of it on record. Why then must our religion be exclusively reproached with such an odium? This *sacred war* of the Greeks happened when that people had nearly reached their highest state of refinement, and cannot of course be set to the account of barbarism; and perhaps as little ought it to be, to the nature of the religion on account of which it was pretendly undertaken. Religion was the pretext, but pride and ambition the real moving cause, just as they still are in like cases.

Nor ought we here to pass in silence another example familiar to almost every one, that of Mahomet and his immediate followers, who carried fire and sword into the three quarters of the eastern continent, with the express purpose of propagating his religion, or rather we may say with the pretended purpose, while the real motive was love of power. True it is Mahomet pretended to have a written commission from Heaven for planting his religion by force: But was not his ambition the author of that pretence? And what is the difference between a pretended written commission, and one derived immediately from the spirit of God, to which Christians have sometimes impiously pretended for purposes of self-aggrandizement? If then paganism, and mahometanism have both excited religious wars, and ravaged nations and continents, let not Christianity be exclusively reproached for her crusading spirit, and the attempts that have been sometimes made to propagate religion by the sword. But let all such attempts, by whomsoever made, be set to their proper cause, and reprobated as the fruit of human pride, and impious ambition. No one has the least reason to be staggered in his faith, because vice prevails among those who profess better things; because many men believe and do not.

The religion of the gospel, in its genuine spirit and power, is a still small voice that is not heard in the noise and bustle of the world, among the great and powerful. We are not therefore to look for its direct influence among statesmen, and those who manage the affairs of nations; we are not in general to expect they will be governed in their measures by motives of religion, but still they are not beyond the reach of its control. For by retiring into the shades of private life, and making its way among the great mass of society, it sweetens and gives a placid turn to their manners; it inspires peace, tran-

* For this see Rollin, vol. V.

quility and order; it makes them kind and beneficent to each other and all the world, more ready to endure affronts, and forbear to revenge injuries and wrongs, more ready to do good, to be charitable and kind: and wicked men in power, whatever may be their inclinations, dare not grossly offend against these manners; or long continue to trample on all regard to a generally prevalent sentiment. They are obliged from a regard to that power which they highly value, and often from motives of personal safety, to conform, at least in exterior, to that general sentiment, and give it the sanction of their authority.

Ambitious statesmen and warriors in Christian countries have to be sure sometimes broken over all these restraints, and set at defiance the feelings of their fellow men. Hundreds of thousands may have been sacrificed, and millions made wretched to gratify their passions; but still, what page of Christian history produces any thing to be compared with pagan or mahometan enormities of this kind? Let any one take up the history of Alexander and his successors; let him consider the towns and cities laid in utter ruins, and the regions depopulated by that ambitious madman; let him survey the treacheries, disregard of oaths and solemn engagements, the poisonings and assassinations which those successors practised upon each other; the mutual invasions and slaughters, which for ages kept their dominions in a constant state of alarm and misery; let him reflect upon the horrible calamities thus brought upon those, then finest regions of the earth, at which humanity shudders, and nature sickens; and then say in what age or country of Christendom a parellel is to be found. And notwithstanding the moderation and dignified forbearance, of which the *Romans* were so ready to boast themselves, yet it should be remembered that they could not sufficiently glut their vengeance against their hated rival *Carthage*, without rasing to the very foundations that devoted city, and butchering, or dispersing to the four winds all its inhabitants. Nor are there wanting many other examples of like *Roman moderation* towards their enemies. Could such savage revenge be perpetrated by a people professing to be Christians? It never has been; and we trust in God never will be. These Romans boasted of their refinements and civilization, and not without reason, for they had them to the extent then known in the world. What then has made the difference, but the mild spirit of the Christian religion, which has softened the ferocity of man, and effectually curbed such beastial revenge?

Human nature, it must be admitted, is nearly the same in all ages and countries, except what arises from different degrees of culture. Lest then it should be alledged that the contrast between those ancient, and the modern Christian nations, arises entirely from a naturally progressive state of improvement in man, take a modern instance, that of the Persian usurper *Kouli Khan*, within the memory of some now living; who comes no whit behind those ancients in the ferocity with which he carried on his wars. Yet the Persians, whom he impelled to such deeds of horror, are by no means barbarians: They possess and enjoy all the common arts of civil life; science prevails among them, and the only difference that we can see is, they have not

imbibed mildness and humanity from the pure fountain of the Christian religion.

Christian nations do indeed too often find, or think they find, causes of war; but do those, who are so ready to make this a matter of accusation, consider that by the influence of this obnoxious religion, war has lost a great part of its horrors, and is converted almost into "a civil game," in comparison with what it once was? By the code of war now universally received among Christians, an enemy, so soon as he lays down his arms and submits himself, is entitled to the treatment of a friend: He is so far from being in any danger to life or limb, that he enjoys all the comforts which his late enemy can furnish; his wounds, if any he has received, are humanely healed; he is entitled to a great share of personal freedom, and frequently he enjoys complete liberty, upon his word of honour; and in all cases he may depend upon soon being exchanged, and returning to his friends and his country; or again to resume his arms, and have an opportunity of exercising the same generosity in his turn.

These principles have undoubtedly lowered that spirit of desperate valour, which can rush on inevitable death, in the contest of arms. And suppose this a sacrifice of advantages to any people, yet is it a sacrifice not unwisely made; for while personal valour is lowered, the ferocity of man's nature is also curbed and softened; war thus becomes a business of art and stratagem, a contrivance of the reason and understanding, rather than dependent on the strength of the arm, and the hardihood of courage. From all this, far less effusion of blood follows a state of war; immense numbers of lives are saved; and that hardened insensibility, which results from familiarity with scenes of slaughter and destruction, is in a great measure removed. If victory, death, or perpetual slavery were the only alternatives, who would not exert himself to the most desperate extremity? And do those who so freely accuse Christians of a propensity to war, know that such was universally the case, before the gospel inspired more humane and wise sentiments; and that such continues to be the case where that benevolent reformer of men has not yet made its way? If they know it, it is but too manifest they have not duly considered its importance; if they had, instead of reproaching, they would admire and reverence the gospel of Jesus; which, though it may not have put an end to wars, has so much mitigated their horrors. It cannot surely be the wish of any one to dry up this pure stream of beneficence to human society, to the race of man; let them cease then to throw impediments in the way of its flowing: Let them cease to cast obloquy upon the fountain from whence it flows, lest haply they may be deprived of its benefits, and be obliged to drink of the bitter cup of inhumanity, violence and cruelty, from the fountain of unrestrained depravity inherent in fallen man.

THE following little Tract with the subjoined Letters was circulated a number of years ago, and is by this time probably almost forgotten. Coming from a man of so much piety and religion as *Charles Wesley* certainly was, it is entitled to notice. And if in this shape, it should not fall into the hands of many of those for whom it was primarily intended, it is thought it may be of service to settle and confirm the faith of some, who already profess the same sentiments with its author. EDITOR.

WESLEY'S REASONS FOR NOT SEPARATING FROM THE CHURCH.

BECAUSE it would be a contradiction to the solemn and repeated declarations which we have made in all manner of ways, in preaching, in print, and in private conversation.

Because, on this, as well as many other accounts, it would give huge occasion of offence to those who seek and desire occasion; to all the enemies of God and truth.

Because it would exceedingly prejudice against us many who fear, yea, who love God; and thereby hinder their receiving so much, perhaps any farther benefit from our preaching.

Because it would hinder multitudes of those who neither love nor fear God, from hearing us at all.

Because it would be throwing balls of wildfire among them that are now quiet in the land. We are now sweetly united together in love. We mostly think and speak the same thing. But this would occasion inconceivable strife and contention between those who left, and those who remained in the Church, as well as between those who left us, and those that remained with us: nay, and between those very persons who remained, as they were variously inclined one way or the other.

Because, to form the plan of a new Church would require infinite time and care, (which might be far more profitably bestowed) with much more wisdom, and greater depth and extensiveness of thought, than any of us are masters of.

Because, from some having barely entertained a distant thought of this, evil fruits have already followed; such as prejudice against the clergy in general, and aptness to believe ill of them; contempt, not without a degree of bitterness, of clergymen, as such; and a sharpness of language towards the whole order, utterly unbecoming either gentlemen or Christians.

Because we have melancholy instances of this, even before our eyes. Many have, in our memory, left the Church, and formed themselves into distinct bodies. And certainly some of them from a real persuasion, that they should do God more service. But have any separated themselves and prospered? Have they been either more holy, or more useful than they were before;

Because by such a separation we should not only throw away the peculiar glorying which God hath given us, "That we do and will suffer all things for our brethren's sake, though the more we love them, the less we be loved;" but should act in direct contradiction to that very end, for which we believe God hath raised us up. The chief design of his providence in sending us out, is undoubtedly

to quicken our brethren. And the first message of all our preachers is, to the lost sheep of the Church of England. Now would it not be a flat contradiction to this design, to separate from the Church? These things being considered, we cannot apprehend, (whether it be lawful in itself or no) that it is lawful for us; were it only on this ground, that it is by no means expedient.

It has indeed been objected, that till we do separate, we cannot be a compact, united body.

It is true, we cannot till then be a compact, united body, if you mean by that expression, a body distinct from all others; and we have no desire so to be.

We look upon ourselves, not as the authors or ringleaders of a particular sect or party; it is the farthest thing from our thoughts; but as messengers of God to those who are Christians in name, but heathens in heart and life; to call them back to that from which they are fallen, to real, genuine Christianity. We are therefore debtors to all these, of whatever opinion and denomination; and are consequently to do all that in us lies, to please all for their good to edification.

We look upon the *Methodists*, so called, in general, not as any particular party; (this would exceedingly obstruct the grand design for which we conceive God has raised them up)—but as living witnesses in, and to every party, of that Christianity which we preach; which is hereby demonstrated to be a real thing, and visibly held out to all the world.

We look upon the clergy, not only as a part of our brethren, but as that part whom God, by his adorable Providence, has called to be watchmen over the rest, for whom therefore they are to give a strict account. If these men neglect their important charge; if they do not watch over them with all their power, they will be of all men most miserable, and so are entitled to our deepest compassion. So that to feel, and much more to express either contempt or bitterness towards them, betrays an utter ignorance of ourselves and of the spirit which we especially should be of.

Might it not be at least a prudential rule, for every Methodist preacher, not to frequent any dissenting meeting? Though we blame none who have been always accustomed to it. But if we do this, certainly our people will. Now, this is actually separating from the Church. If, therefore, it is, at least, not expedient to separate, neither is this expedient. Indeed, we may attend our assemblies and the Church too, because they are at different hours. But we cannot attend both the meeting and the Church, because they are at the same hours. If it be said, "But at the Church, we are fed with "chaff; whereas, at the meeting we have wholesome food:" We answer; 1st. The prayers of the Church are not chaff; they are substantial food for any who are alive to God. 2d. The Lord's supper is not chaff, but pure and wholesome for all who receive it with upright hearts. Yea. 3d. In almost all the sermons we hear there, we hear many great and important truths. And whoever has a spiritual discernment may easily separate the chaff from the wheat therein. 4th. How little is the case mended at the meeting? Either

the teachers are new-light-men, denying the Lord that bought them, and overturning his gospel from the very foundation; or they are predestinarians, and so preach predestination and final perseverance more or less. Now, whatever this may be to them who were educated therein, yet to those of our brethren who have lately embraced it, repeated experience shows it is not wholesome food; rather to them it has the effect of deadly poison. In a short time it destroys all their zeal for God. They grow fond of opinions and strife of words. They despise self-denial and the daily cross; and to complete all, wholly separate from their brethren.

Nor is it expedient for any Methodist preacher to imitate the dissenters in their manner of praying: neither in his *tone;* all particular tones, both in praying and preaching, should be avoided with the utmost care. Nor in his *language;* all his words should be plain and simple, such as the lowest of his hearers both use and understand. Nor in the length of his prayer, which should not usually exceed four or five minutes, either before or after sermon.

If we continue in the Church, not by chance, or for want of thought, but upon solid and well-weighed reasons, then we should never speak contemptuously of the Church, or any thing pertaining to it. In some sense, it is the mother of us all, who have been brought up therein.

In order to cut off all jealousy and suspicion from our friends, and hope from our enemies, of our having any design to separate from the Church, it would be well for every methodist preacher, who has no scruple concerning it, to attend the service of the Church as often as conveniently he can. And the more we attend it, the more we love it, as constant experience shews. On the contrary, the longer we abstain from it, the less desire we have to attend it at all.

To these reasons assigned by Mr. Wesley for not separating from *the Church*, I shall subjoin a quotation from his *Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion.*

Page 134. He thus addresses himself to the *Members of the Church of England.*

"WE do not dispute concerning any of the *externals* or *circumstantials* of religion. There is no room; for we agree with you therein. We approve of, and adhere to them all; all that we learned together when we were children in our *catechism* and *common prayer book*. We were born and bred up in your own *Church*, and desire to die therein. We always were, and are now zealous for the Church; only not with a blind, angry zeal. We hold, and ever have done, the same opinions, which you and we received from our forefathers. But we do not lay the main stress of our religion on any opinions, right or wrong: Neither do we ever begin, or willingly join in any dispute concerning them. The weight of all religion, we apprehend, rests on holiness of heart and life. And consequently, wherever we come, we press this with all our might. How wide then is the difference between our case and the case of any of those [Dissenters] that are above mentioned? They *avowedly separated*

from the Church: We utterly *disavow* any such design. They severely, and almost continually inveighed against the *doctrines* and *discipline* of the Church they left. We approve both the *doctrines* and *discipline* of our Church, and inveigh only against ungodliness and unrighteousness. They spent great part of their time and strength in contending about *externals* and *circumstantials*. We agree with you in both; so that having no room to spend any time in such vain contention, we have our desire of spending and being spent, in promoting plain, practical religion."

Now what excuse can be offered for Mr. Wesley's separating from the *Church*, contrary to these solemn declarations and protestations?—Charity whispers—*He did it when he was eighty-two years of age.*

[*To be continued.*]

A PRAYER FOR THE USE OF A CLERGYMAN.

The following truly excellent composition, which comprehends in a fervent devotional address, the leading points of ministerial duty, is taken from the appendix to a translation of MASSILLON'S CHARGES; just published by the Rev. T. ST. JOHN, LL. B.

GOD, and Father of mercy, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, who seest all our miseries, and knowest all our infirmities, I prostrate myself at thy throne, beseeching thee to hear my prayer, and to receive the petitions which I now offer unto thee. I present myself in humble adoration before thee, ardently desirous of knowing thy will, and earnestly supplicating the assistance of thy powerful grace, that I may be enabled to fulfil it. To this end, correct and subdue in me all inordinate desires and unholy attachments; impress thy law on my soul, that it may both establish my principles and influence my behaviour; that both the thoughts of my heart and tenor of my life, may be such as "become a minister of the Gospel of Christ." Let no avocations withdraw me from entering daily into myself, that I may become more and more acquainted with my own heart; that its approbation may be my greatest comfort, and its reproaches my greatest dread. Engrave upon my mind the character which thou expectest me to sustain in society: the good which my example will produce, if it be irreproachable and amiable: the evil, if worthless or suspected. Guard me, therefore, against levity of behaviour; against sudden passion, and violent transports; against bewitching pleasures, contemptible meannes, detestable avarice, and unlawful gain. Let no deviation from piety be encouraged by my demeanor; but may my private life most efficaciously enforce my public preaching. May no soul sanction its indiscretions, or extenuate its vices, by pleading the licence of my unworthiness.

As a minister of thy holy word, grant me an uniform and regular diligence, which may neither be overcome by indolence, nor enfeebled by relaxations. Let no indulgence in amusements, however innocent, nor attachment to studies, however enticing, seduce me from

an invariable application to the several duties of my calling; but may every pursuit, which is not an immediate part of it, be regulated by prudence, and restrained by severity, lest my mind should be alienated from the discharge of ecclesiastical functions, and divested from the attainment of evangelical holiness; lest I should forget that I am in thy holy Church, *a guide to the blind, and a light to them that are in darkness;* and lest, after having preached to others, and warned them against the baits of temptation, and the allurements of sin, I myself should be treacherously overcome by the one, and everlastingly ruined by the other. Grant me to be a watchful shepherd, preserving, by prudent advice and salutary counsels, the flock within the fold, which I have undertaken to instruct in faith, and deliver from danger.

Impress me with such a sense of the station which I am appointed to fill, that I may devote all the powers of my mind, and all the faculties of my soul, to a faithful discharge of it: let me never forget, that, whether it is obscure or exalted, I am equally an ambassador of the King of Kings, and a servant of the Lord of Lords. Thus honoured, thus distinguished, may no temptations of interest, or allurements of pleasure, damp the vigorous exertion and unwearied diligence, inherent in the commission of thy ministers, to bring the souls of whom thou hast appointed me the spiritual overseer, to *a knowledge of the truth;* to an acquaintance with their moral condition; to a firm trust in thy goodness, and an uniform obedience to thy will. May every discourse which I deliver, be calculated, by thy divine blessing, to awaken the thoughtless, and alarm the impenitent, or to establish the righteous in the ways of godliness, and comfort those that mourn. When I *preach thy laws, and take thy covenant in my mouth*, let me not be satisfied with the persuasion, that the discourse, which ought to excite, in every one who hears it, an ardent desire of salvation, is ingenious in its composition, solid in its arguments, or elegant in its style; rather, O God, may it penetrate the hearts, and supply the wants of those *very many in the open valley, who are very dry;* and may thy spirit, in the delivery of it, *say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord, behold I will cause breath to enter into you; and may they stand upon their feet, an exceeding great army: put thy Spirit into them, and they shall live:* awaken them, and all men, from the deadly torpor of insensibility; animate them with a lively sense, and a deep conviction of their deplorable condition; and if it seem good unto thee, leave them no rest in their souls, until they see the danger, and anticipate the punishment, of their horrible ingratitude and daring rebellion. *Open their eyes that they sleep not in death. Pour upon them the spirit of grace and of supplication.* May the temples in which we assemble to worship thee, exhibit congregations of men, not collected by the power of habit, but actuated with reverence and godly fear: And that they may not presume to present themselves before thee with unseemly levity, and with unprepared minds; *approaching thee with their lips, whilst their hearts are far from thee;* do thou inscribe on their souls this awful sentiment;—*wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God!*" may the parents,

by the influence of example, infuse into their offspring a principle of devotion; may they *infuse the same into* their *children, and* their *children into* another *generation.* When we *thus call upon thy name, we know that thou wilt hear us; thou wilt graciously say, it is my people; and we, in humble thankfulness shall say, the Lord is our God.* Let thine heritage, the Church, *which thou hast purchased with thy blood*, be no longer defiled by the lamentable ignorance and abominable stupidity, which contemptuously refuse to hear the calls of truth, and impiously set at nought the exhortations of piety.

But whatever shall be the effect of thy holy word in my mouth; whether I am encouraged to meditation, study, and labour, by the increase of morals, and the prevalence of religion; or humbled and depressed by ignorance of thy laws, and contempt of thy word, let me not be discontented and impatient, but wait thy good time, when it shall please thee to give the increase. May judgment direct, and zeal stimulate me to try every method, and adopt every expedient, to convert sinners unto thee. And, oh! if it be thy blessed will, let me not labour in vain. May the hearts of all those over whom thou hast apppointed me to watch, be induced to *receive the word with meekness*, to apply it with fidelity, and to *bring forth the fruits of the spirit.* May the quiet of families, the obedience of servants, the kindness of masters, the duty of children, and the affection of parents, all result from the preaching of thy holy word. May the study of the sacred oracles employ their leisure and edify their minds; and may it be thy good pleasure, to *make a covenant of peace with them, to set thy Sanctuary in the midst of them, that they may be thy people, and thou be their God, in truth and in righteousness.* Produce, I humbly implore thee, this conversion unto thee, this change of will and renewal of heart, that as often as thou shalt call those entrusted to me, to give an account of their conduct, I may have the consolation of believing that they have *died in thy faith and fear; that their peace was made with thee; and that their names were written in the book of life.*

When I pray that all the flock may be thine, humbly and earnestly do I beseech thee, that the Shepherd may not be abandoned of thee. Let not my unworthiness to minister at the altar, be the cause of my reprobation: but when thou shalt summon me to give an account of my stewardship, of my behaviour as a man, of my piety as a Christian, and of my fidelity as a minister; grant that my soul may be supported by faith, and enlivened with hope; that the retrospect of a life passed in *keeping of thy commandments*, in preaching thy word, and promoting thy glory, may smooth the face of death, and bereave the grave of all its terrors.

And whilst I implore thy blessing on my labours, and on the people committed to my charge, beseeching thee that our lives may be holy in order that our deaths may be happy, I pour out my soul in supplications, that thy Gospel may dispense its benign influence through every land: may it be faithfully preached, and conscientiously practised; and may it be productive, in the hands of all thy ministers, of the everlasting salvation of those to whom it is announced. May the peace which it proclaims, be universally established,

and nation go to war with nation no more: may the several families of the earth be actuated by religious principles; and may concord and unanimity, brotherly love and Christian charity, be the distinguishing characteristics of all those to whatever sect they belong, and to whatever party they are attached, *who name the name of Christ.*

Above all, I humbly entreat thee, that thy Providence may in an especial manner be extended over this thy Church, *which thy own right hand hath planted;* do thou be pleased to dwell in the midst of it, that it may be called *the dwelling of truth, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts, the holy mountain: may the inhabitants of every city and of every place, go one to another, saying, let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts in his holy temple:* may it no longer be said of any of its members, that *they trust not in the Lord, and that they draw not near to their God:* but do thou, in mercy, *make of them a name and a praise among all people of the earth.* May the Gospel be preached in it, in all its purity, and may the lives of its ministers be its brightest ornaments; *may the law of truth be in their mouth, and let not iniquity be found in their lips; may they walk before thee in peace and equity, and turn many away from their iniquity:* may its worship be duly frequented, and its sacraments, in particular the commemoration of our redemption in the Holy Communion, be religiously observed; may that blessed ordinance be no longer a *stone of stumbling* to the ignorant, and a *rock of offence* to the weak; but may the *old men and all the inhabitants of the land, receive it to their comfort,* and may it no longer be *the reproach of their children, that they go away from the heavenly feast, and do not keep it:* may schism be extirpated from *the habitation of thy house;* and may attachment to it, proceeding from a conviction of its purity and truth, be individually established; may the voice of joy and salvation be heard in every dwelling: and may the several families of which this thy Church is composed, erect an alter unto thee, and may they daily offer upon it, *an oblation of great gladness: saying, blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever, Amen!*

SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF
DOCTOR HAMMOND.

[Concluded from page 250.]

HE took every opportunity of assisting the loyal sufferers abroad; and, though this great duty was declared treason by the men in power, he continued to send over several sums for their relief. But this practice had narrowly proved his ruin, for the person to whom he had entrusted a commission of this kind was seized, and the doctor's letters were delivered to Cromwell. However, no notice was taken of him; and he persevered in the same charitable course during the remainder of the usurpation. He began now severely to feel the effects of his rigid and intense mortifications, being attacked by four different diseases at once, each of them sufficiently afflictive to render life a burden, the stone, the gout, the cholic,

and the cramp; the last of which was as troublesome as any of the others. But this complication of complaints he bore with the greatest calmness and resignation. During the whole course of that tyranny under which the nation groaned for so many years, he preserved a constant serenity and indifference to outward incidents; but when circumstances indicated a favourable change, he began to be pensive and concerned. He saw clearly that he should be called into a busier sphere of action than he had hitherto moved in; and though he rejoiced at the prospect as a public good, he sighed for that better world where he should rest in peace. "I must confess," said he to a friend, "that I never saw that time in all my life, where-"in I could say so chearfully my *nunc dimittis* as now. Indeed I do "dread prosperity, I do really dread it; for the little good I am able "to do, I can do it with deliberation and advice; but if please God I "should live, and be called to any higher office in the Church, I must "then do many things in a hurry, and shall not then have time to "consult with others; and I sufficiently apprehend the danger of "relying upon my own judgment."

And it pleased God to grant his desire. At the opening of the year 1660, when every thing visibly tended to the restoration of the king, the doctor was desired to repair to London, to assist in repairing the sad breaches which had been made in the Church. This summons he was reluctantly going to obey, when, on the 4th of April, he was seized with so violent a fit of the stone, that his life was despaired of: however he languished on till the 25th of that month. During this period he eminently manifested the superlative excellence of the Christian principles; for he bore his acute disorder with the greatest patience, desiring his friends, who shewed much anxiety for his life, to pray only that he might be fitted for his change. He himself, with great affection, interceded for the Church and nation, and for the revival of practical religion, then so much decayed. On the 20th of April, being Good Friday, he solemnly received the sacrament; and again on Easter Sunday. His devotion, notwithstanding his indisposition, in the act of celebration, was remarkably lively, yet accompanied by the deepest humility, which discovered itself in this pathetic ejaculation; for on hearing these words of the Apostle pronounced, *Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners*, he emphatically rejoined, *Of whom I am chief!*

About this time he was seized with a violent bleeding, which was succeeded by a lethargic drowsiness, a sure sign of his approaching dissolution. At the time of prayer, though he returned every response, yet he greatly lamented his heaviness, saying, "Alas! this is "all the return I shall make to his mercy, to sleep at prayers."

When he was in pain, he often prayed for patience; and, while he did so, evidently manifested that his prayer was heard, for he exercised not only this, but thankfulness too; in his greatest extremity crying out, "Blessed be God! blessed be God!"

He behaved to his attendants with great affection, condescending to every proposal, and obeyed, with all mildness, every advice of his physicians. Nor was it a wonder that he should so accept the endeavours of his friends, when he had a tender consideration and kind-

ness for his enemies, even the most inveterate and bloody. When a defeat of the rebels was mentioned with exultation in his presence, the only triumph he took was that of charity, saying, with tears in his eyes, "Poor souls, I beseech God to forgive them!"

The short remainder of his life he employed in administering relief to those about him. He dispensed his best of legacies, his blessings, most passionately exhorting the young hopes of the family, whose first innocence, and shame of doing ill, he advised them always to preserve; to be just to their education, and maintain inviolable their baptismal vow; then he more generally commended to all, the great advantage of friendly admonitions. And when Lady Packington asked him what more special thought he would recommend to her during her whole life, he briefly replied, "Uniform "obedience."

On the evening of the 25th April, 1660, he breathed his soul into the hands of his Saviour, whom he had so faithfully served throughout his life. A few minutes before his departure he uttered these words, which were his last, *Lord, make haste!*

On the next day, agreeable to his own desire, he was buried, without any pomp, in the neighbouring Church of Hampton, with the usual rites of the Church of England; several of the gentry and clergy of the county attended, besides a vast concourse of common people. The clergy thought it an honour, as undoubtedly it was, to bear his remains on their shoulders to the Church, where they are deposited in the vault belonging to the worthy family in which he had resided.

At the time of his death he was nominated to the see of Worcester, and certainly no man was so well qualified at that time to fill that high station; but his own wish was to remove to the Church triumphant, and to join the glorious hierarchy above; and the great head of the Church granted his request.

Dr. Hammond was a very handsome man, tall and graceful; his complexion clear and florid; his eye quick and sprightly; and his face carried dignity and attraction with it, being scarcely ever clouded with a frown, or so much as darkened by reservedness. His constitution was strong, and capable of enduring great fatigue. As to his mind, his judgment was sound, clear, and penetrating; his invention fruitful, nay inexhaustible; from whence proceeded his great readiness in composing; for he dispatched his writings with incredible swiftness, usually composing faster than his amanuensis, though a very dexterous person, could write. His *Considerations on the present Use of Episcopacy* were drawn up after ten o'clock at night, in the chamber of a friend, who professed that, sitting by all the while, he remembered not that he took off his pen from the paper till he had done; and the very next morning, it being fully approved of by the bishop of Salisbury, Dr. Duppa, he sent it to the press.

With regard to his moral conduct, he was most eminent for every virtue which can adorn human nature: his charity was most admirable; misery and want never fell in his way without finding compassion and relief. His temperance was likewise most exemplary; his diet was of the plainest kind; and sauces he scarcely ever could be

prevailed upon to taste, often expressing his surprise "how rational "creatures should eat for any thing but health; since he who ate or "drank that which might cause a fit of the stone or gout, though a "year after, unmanned himself, and acted as a beast."

His temperance in sleep was similar to that of diet, midnight being his usual time for going to rest; four or five, very rarely six, the hour of rising. Every social virtue shone in him with the brightest lustre. He was uncommonly fond of friendship, reckoning it next to religion; and reflecting with compassion on those who were strangers, or indifferent to it, saying, "that they must lead a very "insipid life." He was likewise a man of prodigious diligence and industry, not only avoiding, but having a perfect hatred of idleness, and recommending nothing in his writings, public and private, with so much earnestness as this, "to be furnished constantly with some-thing to do." On this subject it is worth while to transcribe his own remarks in his own forcible language: "No burden," says he, "is "heavier, or temptation more dangerous, than to have time lie on "our hands; the idle man's brains being not only the devil's shop, "but his kingdom too; a model of, and appendage to hell, a place "given up to torment and mischief."

Besides those portions of time which the necessities of nature and civil life extorted from him, there was not a minute of the day which he left vacant. When he walked abroad, he always took a book with him; and, in his chamber, one constantly lay open. His biographer, Dr. Fell, makes the following observations upon this part of his character: "He who shall consider his laborious way, immerst in al-"most infinite quotations, to which the turning over books, and con-"sulting their several editions, was absolutely needful; his obligation "to read, not only classic authors, but the more recent abortions of "the press, wherein he proved frequently concerned; his perusal of "the writings of his friends and strangers designed for the press; his "reviews of his own works, and correcting them with his own hands "sheet by sheet, as they were printed, which he did to all his latter "tracts; his receptions of visits, whether of civility or of conse-"quence, or information in points of difficulty, which were numerous "and great devourers of his time; his agency for men of quality, "providing them schoolmasters for their children, and chaplains in "their houses, in which affair he set up a kind of office; his general "correspondences by letter, whereof some cost him ten, others "twenty, thirty, forty, nay sixty sheets of paper, and even took up "two days of the week entirely; the time exhausted by his sickness-"es; his constant preaching, and instructing the family where he "was; and, amidst all, his sure returns of prayer: all these were "sufficient proofs of his uncommon diligence."

We shall now conclude the character of this brilliant luminary of the Church, in the words of bishop Burnet, at the same time entering our caveat against the latitudinarian sentiment conveyed in them respecting the supposed conduct of Dr. Hammond, had he happily lived to have assisted in the re-settlement of the Church:—"His death," says the bishop, "was an unspeakable loss to the Church: "for, as he was a man of great learning and of most eminent merit, he

"having been the person who, during those bad times, had maintained "ed the cause of the Church in a very singular manner; so he was "a moderate man in his temper, *though with a high principle*, and "*probably* would have fallen into *healing counsels*. He was also "much set on reforming abuses, and for raising in the clergy a due "sense of the obligations they lay under."

The most considerable of his writings are, 1. A Commentary on the New Testament, folio, an edition of which, but garbled, was published by Le Clerc, at Amsterdam. 2. A Commentary on the Book of Psalms, folio. 3. A Practical Catechism, 8vo, of which many editions have been published. This is, indeed, the best practical system of divinity in our language.

It was the laudable practice of the late excellent Dr. Samuel Johnson, to give or recommend Dr. Hammond's Works to those of his friends who were about to enter into holy orders.

ARCHDEACON PALEY, ON MIRACLES.

[Concluded from page 262.]

IN appreciating the credit of any miraculous story, the foregoing are distinctions which relate to the evidence. There are other distinctions, of great moment in the question, which relate to the miracles themselves. Of which latter kind the following ought carefully to be retained.

I. It is not necessary to admit as a miracle, what can be resolved into a false perception. Of this nature was the demon of Socratos; the visions of St. Anthony, and of many others; the vision which Lord Herbert of Cherbury describes himself to have seen; Colonel Gardiner's vision, as related in his life, written by Dr. Doddridge. All these may be accounted for by a momentary insanity; for the characteristic symptom of human madness is, the rising up in the mind of images not distinguishable by the patient from impressions upon the senses.* The cases, however, in which the possibility of this delusion exists, are divided from the cases in which it does not exist, by many, and those not obscure marks. They are, for the most part, cases of visions or voices. The object is hardly ever touched. The vision submits not to be handled. One sense does not confirm another. They are likewise almost always cases of a *solitary* witness. It is in the highest degree improbable, and I know not, indeed, whether it hath ever been the fact, that the same derangement of the mental organs should seize different persons at the same time; a derangement, I mean, so much the same, as to represent to their imagination the same objects. Lastly, these are always cases of *momentary* miracles; by which term I mean to denote miracles, of which the whole existence is of short duration, in contradistinction to miracles which are attended with permanent effects. The appearance of a spectre, the hearing of a supernatural sound, is a momentary miracle. The sensible proof is gone, when the apparition or sound is over. But if a person born blind be restored to sight, a notorious cripple to the use of his limbs, or a dead

* Batty on Lunacy.

man to life, here is a permanent effect produced by supernatural means. The change indeed was instantaneous, but the proof continues. The subject of the miracle remains. The man cured or restored is there: his former condition was known, and his present condition may be examined. This can by no possibility be resolved into false perception: and of this kind are by far the greater part of the miracles recorded in the New Testament. When Lazarus was raised from the dead, he did not merely move, and speak, and die again; or come out of the grave and vanish away. He returned to his home and his family, and there continued; for we find him, some time afterwards, in the same town, sitting at table with Jesus and his sisters; visited by great multitudes of the Jews as a subject of curiosity; giving, by his presence, so much uneasiness to the Jewish rulers, as to beget in them a design of destroying him.* No delusion can account for this. The French prophets in England, some time since, gave out that one of their teachers would come to life again, but their enthusiasm never made them believe that they actually saw him alive. The blind man, whose restoration to sight at Jerusalem is recorded in the ninth chapter of St. John's gospel, did not quit the place, or conceal himself from enquiry. On the contrary, he was forthcoming, to answer the call, to satisfy the scrutiny, and to sustain the browbeating of Christ's angry and powerful enemies.

When the cripple at the gate of the temple was suddenly cured by Peter,† he did not immediately relapse into his former lameness, or disappear out of the city; but boldly and honestly produced himself along with the Apostles, when they were brought the next day before the Jewish council.‡ Here, though the miracle was sudden, the proof was permanent. The lameness had been notorious, the cure continued. This, therefore, could not be the effect of any momentary delirium, either in the subject or in the witnesses of the transaction. It is the same with the greatest number of the scripture miracles. There are other cases of a *mixed* nature, in which, although the principal miracle be momentary, some circumstance combined with it is permanent. Of this kind is the history of St. Paul's conservation.§ The sudden light and sound, the vision and the voice, upon the road to Damascus, were momentary; but Paul's blindness for three days in consequence of what had happened; the communication made to Ananias in another place, and by a vision independent of the former; Ananias finding out Paul in consequence of intelligence so received, and finding him in the condition described, and Paul's recovery of his sight upon Ananias laying his hands upon him, are circumstances, which take the transaction, and the principal miracle as included in it, entirely out of the case of momentary miracles, or of such as may be accounted for by false perceptions. Exactly the same thing may be observed of Peter's vision preparatory to the call of Cornelius, and of its connection with what was imparted in a distant place to Cornelius himself, and with the message dispatched by Cornelius to Peter. The vision might be a dream, the message could not. Either communication, taken separately, might be a delusion; the concurrence of the two was impossible to happen without a supernatural cause.

* John xii. 1, 2, 9, 10. † Acts iii. 2. ‡ Acts iv. 14. § Acts. ix.

Beside the risk of delusion which attaches upon momentary miracles, there is also much more room for imposture. The account cannot be examined at the moment. And, when that is also a moment of hurry and confusion, it may not be difficult for men of influence to gain credit to any story, which they may wish to have believed. This is precisely the case of one of the best attested of the miracles of old Rome, the appearance of Castor and Pollux in the battle fought by Posthumius with the Latins at the lake Regillus. There is no doubt but that Posthumius after the battle, spread the report of such an appearance. No person could deny it, whilst it was said to last. No person, perhaps, had any inclination to dispute it afterwards, or if they had, could say with positiveness, what was or what was not seen, by some or other of the army, in the dismay, and amidst the tumult of a battle.

In assigning false perceptions, as the origin to which some miraculous accounts may be referred, I have not mentioned claims to inspiration, illuminations, secret notices or directions, internal sensations, or consciousnesses of being acted upon by spiritual influences, good or bad; because these, appealing to no external proof, however convincing they may be to the persons themselves, form no part of what can be accounted miraculous evidence. Their own credibility stands upon their alliance with other miracles. The discussion, therefore, of all such pretensions may be omitted.

II. It is not necessary to bring into the comparison what may be called *tentative* miracles; that is, where, out of a great number of trials, some succeed, and in the accounts of which, although the narrative of the successful cases be alone preserved, and that of the unsuccessful cases sunk, yet enough is stated to shew that the cases produced are only a few out of many in which the same means have been employed. This observation bears, with considerable force, upon the ancient oracles and auguries, in which a single coincidence of the event with the prediction, is talked of and magnified, whilst failures are forgotten, or suppressed, or accounted for. It is also applicable to the cures wrought by relics, and at the tombs of saints. The boasted efficacy of the king's touch, upon which Mr. Hume lays some stress, falls under the same description. Nothing is alledged concerning it, which is not alledged of various nostrums, namely, out of many thousands who have used them, certified proofs of a few who have recovered after them. No solution of this sort is applicable to the miracles of the gospel. There is nothing in the narrative which can induce, or even allow us to believe, that Christ attempted cures in many instances, and succeeded in a few; or that he ever made the attempt in vain. He did not profess to heal every where all that were sick; on the contrary, he told the Jews, evidently meaning to represent his own case, that "although many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land, yet unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow:" and that "many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the of prophet, and none

them was cleansed saving Naaman the Syrian."* By which examples he gave them to understand, that it was not the nature of a divine interposition, or necessary to its purpose, to be general; still less, to answer every challenge that might be made, which would teach men to put their faith upon these experiments. Christ never pronounced the word, but the effect followed.† It was not a thousand sick that received his benediction, and a few that were benefited: a single paralytic is let down in his bed at Jesus' feet, in the midst of the surrounding multitude; Jesus bid him walk, and he did so.‡ A man with a withered hand is in the synagogue; Jesus bid him stretch forth his hand, in the presence of the assembly, and it was "restored whole like the other."§ There was nothing tentative in these cures; nothing that can be explained by the power of accident.

We may observe also that many of the cures which Christ wrought, such as that of a person blind from his birth, also many miracles beside cures, as raising the dead, walking upon the sea, feeding a great multitude with a few loaves and fishes, are of a nature which does not in any wise admit of the supposition of a fortunate experiment.

III. We may dismiss from the question all accounts in which, allowing the phenomenon to be real, the fact to be true, it still remains doubtful whether a miracle were wrought. This is the case with the ancient history of what is called the thundering legion, of the extraordinary circumstances which obstructed the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem by Julian, the circling of the flames and fragrant smell at the martyrdom of Polycarp, the sudden shower that extinguished the fire into which the scriptures were thrown in the Diocletian persecution; Constantine's dream, his inscribing in consequence of it, the cross upon his standard and the shields of his soldiers; his victory, and the escape of the standard bearer; perhaps also the imagined appearance of the cross in the heavens, though this last circumstance is very deficient in historical evidence. It is also the case with the modern annual exhibition of liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius at Naples. It is a doubt likewise, which ought to be excluded by very special circumstances, from those narratives which relate to the supernatural cure of hypochondriacal and nervous complaints, and of all diseases which are much affected by the imagination. The miracles of the second and third century are, usually, healing the sick, and casting out evil spirits, miracles in which there is room for some error and deception. We hear nothing of causing the blind to see, the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, the lepers to be cleansed.¶ There are also instances in Christian writers of reputed miracles, which were natural operations, though

* Luke iv. 25. ‡ Mark. ii. 3. § Mat. xii. 10. ¶ Jortin's Rem. vol. II. p. 51.

† One, and only one, instance may be produced in which the *disciples* of Christ do seem to have attempted a cure, and not to have been able to perform it. The story is very ingenuously and candidly related by three of the evangelists.* The patient was afterwards healed by Christ himself; and the whole transaction seems to have been intended, as it was well suited, to display the superiority of Christ above all who performed miracles in his name; a distinction which, during his presence in the world, it might be necessary to inculcate by some such proof as this.

* *Mark ix.* 14. *Mat. xvi.* 20.

not known to be such at the time, as that of articulate speech after the loss of a great part of the tongue.

IV. To the same head of objection nearly, may also be referred accounts, in which the variation of a small circumstance may have transformed some extraordinary appearance, or some critical coincidence of events, into a miracle; stories, in a word, which may be resolved into exaggeration. The miracles of the gospel can by no possibility be explained away in this manner. Total fiction will account for any thing; but no stretch of exaggeration that has any parallel in other histories, no force of fancy upon real circumstances, could produce the narrative which we now have. The feeding of the five thousand with a few loaves and fishes surpasses all bounds of exaggeration. The raising of Lazarus, of the widow's son at Nain, as well as many of the cures which Christ wrought, come not within the compass of misrepresentation. I mean, that it is impossible to assign any position of circumstances, however peculiar, any accidental effects, however extraordinary, any natural singularity, which could supply an origin or foundation to these accounts.

Having thus enumerated several exceptions, which may justly be taken to relations of miracles, it is necessary, when we read the scriptures to bear in our mind this general remark, that although there be miracles recorded in the New Testament, which fall within some or other of the exceptions here assigned, yet that they are united with others, to which none of the same exceptions extend, and that their credibility stands upon this union. Thus the visions and revelations, which St. Paul asserts to have been imparted to him, may not, in their separate evidence, be distinguishable from the visions and revelations which many others have alledged. But here is the difference. St. Paul's pretensions were attested by external miracles wrought by himself, and by miracles wrought in the cause to which these visions relate; or to speak more properly, the same historical authority which informs us of one, informs us of the other. This is not ordinarily true of the visions of enthusiasts, or even of the accounts in which they are contained. Again, some of Christ's own miracles were *momentary;* as the transfiguration, the appearance and voice from heaven at Christ's baptism, a voice from the clouds upon one occasion afterwards, (John xii. 30.) and some others.

It is not denied, that the distinction which we have proposed concerning miracles of this species, applies in diminution of the force of the evidence, as much to these instances, as to others. But this is the case, not with all the miracles ascribed to Christ, nor with the greatest part, nor with many. Whatever force therefore may be in the objection, we have numerous miracles which are free from it; and even those to which it is applicable, are little affected by it in their credit, because there are few, who, admitting the rest, will reject *them.* If there be miracles of the New Testament, which come within any of the *other* heads into which we have distributed the objections, the same remark must be repeated. And this is one way, in which the unexampled number and variety of the miracles ascribed to Christ, strengthens the credibility of Christianity. For it precludes any solution, or conjecture about a solution, which imagina-

tion, or even which experience might suggest concerning some particular miracles, if considered independently of others. The miracles of Christ were of various kinds, and performed in great varieties of situation, form and manner ; at Jerusalem, the metropolis of the Jewish nation and religion, in different parts of Judea and Galilee ; in cities, in villages ; in synagogues, in private houses ; in the street, in highways ; with preparation, as in the case of Lazarus; by accident, as in the case of the widow's son at Nain ; when attended by multitudes, and when alone with the patient ; in the midst of his disciples, and in the presence of his enemies ; with the common people around him, and before scribes and pharisees, and rulers of the synagogues.

I apprehend that, when we remove from the comparison, the cases which are fairly disposed of by the observations that have been stated, many cases will not remain. To those which do remain, we apply this final distinction ; " that there is not satisfactory evidence, that persons pretending to be original witnesses of the miracles, passed their lives in labours, dangers and sufferings, voluntarily undertaken and undergone in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and properly in consequence of their belief of the truth of those accounts."

ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS.

Having inserted all the papers and letters that can be found concerning the first American Episcopate, during the progress of the negociation ; it is deemed proper to conclude with the following act of recognition by the Clergy of Connecticut, and Bishop Seabury's address in reply, although they are documents which were published at the time. EDITOR.

To the Right Reverend Father in GOD, SAMUEL, by divine Providence, BISHOP of the Episcopal CHURCH in CONNECTICUT.

The ADDRESS of sundry of the Episcopal Clergy in the State of Connecticut.

REVEREND FATHER,

WE, who have hereunto subscribed our names, in behalf of ourselves, and other presbyters of the Episcopal Church, embrace with pleasure this early opportunity of congratulating you on your safe return to your native country ; and on the accomplishment of that arduous enterprize in which, at our desire, you engaged. Devoutly do we adore and reverently thank the Great Head of the Church, that he has been pleased to preserve you through a long and dangerous voyage ; that he has crowned your endeavours with success, and now at last permits us to enjoy under you, the long and ardently desired blessing of a pure, valid, and free Episcopacy : A blessing which we receive as the precious gift of God himself ; and humbly hope that, the work he has so auspiciously begun, he will confirm and prosper, and make it a real benefit to our Church, not only in

this state, but in the American states in general, by uniting them in doctrine, discipline and worship; by supporting the cause of Christianity against all its opposers; and by promoting piety, peace, concord and mutual affection, among all denominations of Christians.

Whatever can be done by us, for the advancement of so good a work, shall be done with united attention, and the exertion of our best abilities. And as you are now, by our voluntary and united suffrages (signified to you, first at New-York, in April, 1783, by the Rev. Mr. Jarvis, and now ratified and confirmed in this present convention) elected Bishop of that branch of the catholic and apostolic Church to which we belong: We, in the presence of Almighty God, declare to the world, that we do unanimously and voluntarily accept, receive, and recognize you to be *our Bishop*, supreme in the government of the Church, and in the administration of all ecclesiastical offices. And we do solemnly engage to render you all that respect, duty and submission, which we believe do belong, and are due to your high office, and which, we understand, were given by the presbyters to their Bishop in the primitive Church, while, in her native purity, she was unconnected with, and uncontroled by, any secular power.

The experience of many years had long ago convinced the whole body of the clergy, and many of the lay-members of our communion, of the necessity there was of having resident Bishops among us. Fully and publicly was our cause pleaded, and supported by such arguments as must have carried conviction to the minds of all candid and liberal men. They were, however, for reasons which we are unable to assign, neglected by our superiors in England. Some of those arguments were drawn from our being members of the national Church, and subjects of the British government. These lost their force, upon the separation of this country from Great Britain, by the late peace. Our case became thereby more desperate, and our spiritual necessities were much increased. Filial affection still induced us to place confidence in our parent Church and country, whose liberality and benevolence we had long experienced, and do most gratefully acknowledge. To this Church was our immediate application directed, earnestly requesting a Bishop to collect, govern, and continue, our scattered, wandering, and sinking Church; and great was, and still continues to be our surprize, that a request so reasonable in itself, so congruous to the nature and government of that Church, and begging for an officer so absolutely necessary in the Church of Christ, as they and we believe a Bishop to be, should be refused. We hope that the successors of the Apostles in the Church of England have sufficient reasons to justify themselves to the world and to God. We, however, know of none such, nor can our imagination frame any.

But blessed be God! another door was opened for you. In the mysterious œconomy of his Providence he had preserved the remains of the old, Episcopal Church of Scotland, under all the malice and persecutions of its enemies. In the school of adversity, its pious and venerable Bishops had learned to renounce the pomps and grandeur of the world; and were ready to do the work of their heavenly

Father. As out-casts, they pitied us; as faithful holders of the apostolical commission, what they had *freely received* they *freely gave*. From them we have received a free, valid, and purely ecclesiastical Episcopacy, are thereby made complete in all our parts, and have a right to be considered as a living, and, we hope through God's grace shall be, a vigorous branch of the Catholic Church.

To these venerable fathers our sincerest thanks are due, and they have them most fervidly. May the Almighty be their rewarder, regard them in mercy, support them under the persecutions of their enemies, and turn the hearts of their persecutors; and make their simplicity and godly sincerity known unto all men! And wherever the American Episcopal Church shall be mentioned in the world, may this good deed which they have done for us, be spoken of for a memorial of them!

JEREMIAH LEAMING,
RICHARD MANSFIELD,
ABRAHAM JARVIS,
BELA HUBBARD,
JOHN R. MARSHALL,
and others.

Middletown, Aug. 3d, 1785.

BISHOP SEABURY'S ANSWER.

REVEREND BRETHREN, BELOVED IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,

I HEARTILY thank you for your kind congratulations on my safe return to my native country; and cordially join with you in your joy, and thanks to Almighty God, for the success of that important business, which your application excited me to undertake. May God enable us all to do every thing with a view to his glory, and the good of his Church!

Accept of my acknowledgments for the assurances you give me of exerting your best abilities, to promote the welfare, not only of our own Church, but, of common Christianity, and the peace and mutual affection of all denominations of Christians. In so good a work, I trust, you will never find me either backward or negligent.

I should, most certainly, be very apprehensive of sinking under the weight of that high office to which I have been, under God's Providence, raised by your voluntary and free election, did I not assure myself of your ready advice and assistance in the discharge of its important duties; grateful, therefore, to me, must be the assurances you give, of supporting the authority of your Bishop upon the true principles of the primitive Church, before it was controled and corrupted by secular connexions and worldly policy. Let me entreat your prayers to our supreme Head, for the continual presence of his Holy Spirit, that I may in all things do his blessed will.

The surprize you express at the rejection of your application in England is natural. But where the ecclesiastical and civil constitutions are so closely woven together as they are in that country, the first characters in the Church for station and merit, may find their good dispositions rendered ineffectual, by the intervention of the civil

authority: and whether it is better to submit quietly to this state of things in England, or to risk that confussion which would probably ensue, should an amendment be attempted, demands serious consideration.

The sentiments you entertain of the venerable Bishops in Scotland are highly pleasing to me. Their conduct through the whole business was candid, friendly, and Christian; appearing to me to arise from a just sense of duty, and to be founded in, and conducted by, the true principles of the primitive, apostolical Church. And I hope you will join with me in manifestations of gratitude to them, by always keeping up the most intimate communion with them and their suffering Church.

SAMUEL, Bp. Epl. Ch. Connect.

Middletown, Aug. 3d, 1785.

POETRY.

JUDGES, CHAPTER THE 5TH PARAPHRASED.

HEAR, all earth's crown'd monarchs, hear,
Princes and Judges to my song give ear;
To Israel's God my voice I'll raise,
And joyful chant Jehovah's praise.
Lord when in Edom's glorious day
Thou wentest forth in bright array,
Earth to her inmost centre shook,
The mountains melted at thy look,
The clouds dropt down their watery store,
Rent with the thunder's loud tremendous roar.

Must I remember Shamgar's gloomy days,
And that sad time when Jael ruled our coast?
No print of foot then mark'd our publick ways
Waste horror reign'd, the human face was lost.
Then I, I Deborah, assum'd command,
The nursing mother of the drooping land;
Then was our nation alien from the Lord,
Then o'er our heads high wav'd the hostile sword,
Nor shield nor spear was found to arm for fight,
And naked thousands turn'd their backs in flight.

But now awake my soul, and thou arise,
Barak; to thee the victory is given;
Let our joint song ascend the skies,
And celebrate the majesty of heaven.
On me, the priestess of the living Lord,
The care of Israel was bestow'd:
Ephraim and Benjamin obey'd my word,
The scribes of Zebulun allegiance shew'd,
And Issachar, a princely train,
With glittering ensigns dazzled all the plain.
But oh! what sad divisions keep
Reuben inglorious 'midst his bleating sheep?
Gilead in Jordan his asylum seeks,
Dan in his ships, and Asher in his creeks;
Whilst Naphthali's more warlike sons expose
Their gallant lives, and dare their country's foes.
Then was the battle fought by Canaan's kings
In Taânach beside Megeddo's springs:
The stars themselves 'gainst Sisera declare,
Israel is heaven's peculiar care.
Old Kishon stain'd with hostile blood,
Roll'd to the main a purple flood;
The neighing steed, the thundering car
Proclaim'd the terrors of the war;
But high in honour 'bove the rest
Be Jael our avenger blest,
Blest above women! to her tent she drew
With seeming friendship Jabin's mighty chief;
Fainting with heat and toil he sought relief,

He slept, and in his sleep her weary
guest she slew,
The workman's hammer in this hand
she took,
In that the fatal nail, then boldly struck;
Through both his temples drove the
deadly wound,
Transfix'd his brain, and pinn'd him to
the ground.
Why stays my son, his absent mother
cries;
When shall I welcome his returning
car,
Loaded with spoils of conquering war?
Ah wretched mother, hide thine eyes;
At Jael's feet a headless trunk he lies—
So Sisera fell, and God made wars to
cease,
So rested Israel, and the land had peace.

[*R. Cumberland.*

JEHOVAH.

WHO brought me into life at first,
Appeas'd my hunger, slak'd my thirst,
And with a mother's fondness nurst?
Jehovah.

When in unheeding youth I stray'd,
Nor of the snares of vice afraid,
Who was my teacher, guide, and aid?
Jehovah.

Beset with dangers on each hand,
Who scatter'd them by his command,
And safe and fearless bade me stand?
Jehovah.

Who, to his promise ever true,
Display'd sweet virtue to my view,
And help'd her precepts to pursue?
Jehovah.

And next, in life's advancing days,
Who watch'd, and mark'd out all my
ways,
And on my soul shed wisdom's rays?
Jehovah.

But, ah! my erring heart! who still
Would draw thee from the paths of ill,
Who shews thee how to curb thy will?
Jehovah.

The Scriptures, rich in heavenly lore:
Who gives thee power their truths
explore,
And their great Author to adore?
Jehovah.

There wisdom, power and love divine,
In glorious effulgence do shine;
And make me wish that I were thine,
Jehovah.

And who for me a child became;
Who too for me bore every blame,
That I might glow with purest flame!
Jehovah.

Who for lost sinners, death endur'd,
That of their sins they might be cur'd,
And for them endless life procur'd?
Jehovah.

Exalted on thy throne on high,
Look down with mercy's pitying eye,
Nor shut thy ears against my cry,
Jehovah.

Forgive me, Lord, my errors past!
Seal my sincere repentance fast,
Thy word and truth for ever last,
Jehovah.

And should I ever cease to be
A lover of thy word and thee,
Who hast so kindly loved me,
Jehovah.

No; never more may I forbear
To praise thy kindest love and care,
And pour to thee my soul in prayer,
Jehovah!

When I am feeble, old and grey,
May thy strong arm still prove my
stay,
And soothe my aged pains away,
Jehovah!

And when I hang my weary head,
And thou in sickness mak'st my bed,
Still on me sweet affection shed,
Jehovah.

O God! who liv'st above the skies,
When Death's cold hand has clos'd
my eyes,
To thee, then, may my soul arise,
Jehovah!

[*Orth. Ch. Mag.*

THE reader is desired to correct the following error, that was inadvertently made in the copy:—Page 301, third line from the top, for *Charles* Wesley read *John* Wesley.

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